



# FANOS Ethiopia Tours

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## Ethiopian Tourist Attractions

Superb scenery, rich heritage and historic buildings; Africa's most fascinating and varied country, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia (Abyssinia,) the land of a thousand smiles; home of the Ark of the Covenant; custodian of one of the world's first great civilizations; the only African country never to lose its independence; a country whose ancient cultures and magnificent landscapes reflect an extraordinary past that has left an indelible mark on the people and their colorful festivals.

Ethiopia is a country of great antiquity with a culture and tradition dating back more than 3,000 years; it is truly a tourist paradise - beautiful and mysterious. Ethiopia's story begins at the beginning of time, in the very birthplace of mankind. Let us introduce you to one of the last great 'undiscovered' destinations."

The country has also experienced a very old and well preserved historical traditions with fascinating stelae, churches, mosques and castles to witness an attractive cultural diversity of about 80 nations, nationalities and peoples and their various ceremonies, festivals and rituals.

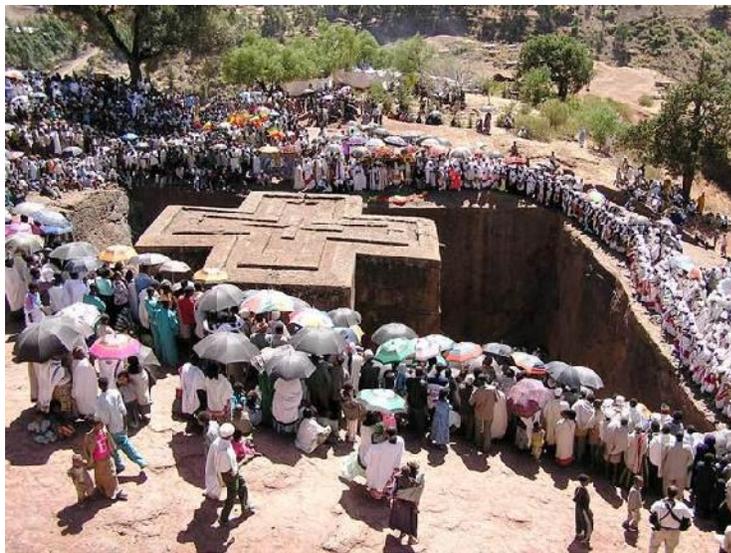
The country is also home of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which opens a window on the authentic world of the Old Testament. Negash which is known as the earliest Muslim settlement in Africa is also found in this historical and beautiful nation-Ethiopia.



*Axumite stelae or obelisks*

**Axum**, Ethiopia's most ancient city is among the major historical sites in the country with a number of remarkable living evidences which is also called "the living museum". Some of the attractions include the magnificent monolithic stelae or obelisks each curved from a single huge piece of granite rock. The biggest monolithic stone, 34 m high, is found in Axum.

In its day, Axum was a great commercial center issuing its own mighty gold, silver and bronze currencies. Ethiopia's oldest church St-Mary of Zion which houses the original Arc of the Covenant is also found in Axum. Besides, tourists have the opportunity to visit different remains of an early Axum palace including various belongings of the legendary Queen of Sheba, the elegant architectural buildings or tombs of several ancient Axumite kings and queens as well as the local archeological museum.



Another magnificent tourist destination, the rock-hewn churches of **lalibela**, is found in the Northern Ethiopia. The Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela were cut out of a living rock during the time of king Lalibela, who ruled Ethiopia from his capital Roha, now Lalibela. The churches are 11 in number, located in three groups.

The Lalibela churches were carved in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is believed that the carving of all the churches took some 23 years.

Archaeologists say it would have taken the work of 40,000 work forces to carve these churches, courtyards and caverns out of a living rock. Described by most travel writers as the eighth wonder, the churches were registered under the list of world Heritage Site in 1978.

**Gondar** is another destination located in the State, north west of Addis Ababa. Founded by Emperor Fasiledes, Gondar was the capital city of Ethiopia in the 17th and 18th centuries. Emperor Fasiledes and his successors built Palaces within the royal enclosure. The castles of successive emperors who ruled the country from Gondar are surrounded by a 900 meters long wall. As a true evidence of an architectural beauty deeply marked by the country's ancient civilization, the royal enclosure, Fasil Ghebbi, was registered by UNESCO as a world Heritage site in 1980.

UNESCO has also registered the **Simien Mountains National Park** which is found 140 kilometers north of the historic town of Gonder, the 17th and 18th centuries capital of Ethiopia. The park is one of the first sites to be included in the list of world Heritage in 1978. The park includes one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world with jagged mountain peaks, deep valleys and sharp precipices dropping some 1500 m. The highest peak is Ras Dashen, the highest mountain in Ethiopia and the fourth in Africa, with an altitude of 4620 meters.

Moreover, the park is home to some extremely rare animals that are endemic to Ethiopia such as the Gelada baboon, the Semen fox and the Walia Ibex. There are also varieties of flora in the park found nowhere, but in Ethiopia. The park was listed under endangered sites in 1996 as a result of the decline of the number of Walia Ibex due to human intervention in the park. However, the number of these rare species is now in the rise after the government has started to take positive measures.

Known as home to human origin, **the Lower Valley of Awash**, found in Afar State, is a site of



paleo-anthropological research. Tremendous findings are registered in the area contributing a lot in the search for human origin and evolution. The most spectacular discovery of Lucy, Australopithecus Afarensis, a 3.2 million years old hominid in 1974, paved the way for more achievements in the study of human origin.

The recent achievement with the discovery of 'selam', a fossil that is the most complete and 150,000 years older than Lucy, is

another testimony for the importance of the region for the study of human origin. The lower Valley of Awash was included in the list of world heritage sites in 1980.

Listed as a World Heritage site in 1980 because of its importance for the understanding of human evolution, **the lower valley of Omo** is an important site for the discovery of many human and animal fossils and stone tools in the valley.

Omo is a river that is 760 kilometers long that stretches from the high lands of West Shoa to Lake Turkana, one of the Great Rift Valley lakes. The area is also home to people with diverse cultures and natural beauty with national parks and an amazing flora and fauna.

Known as the walled city, **Harar** is another historical and beautiful town that was the major commercial center of Islamic learning. In recognition of its cultural heritage, the historic city of

Harar, Jugol wall, was registered by UNESCO as world heritage site in 2006. The wall was constructed to protect the city as its people from the possible attacks.

It is 3.5 kilometer long wall with a height of nearly 4 meters. It has five gates and the wall is still intact and is a symbol of the town. The presence of 99 mosques made Harar to be considered as the fourth holiest city in Islam next to Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Most importantly, Harar is a symbol of tolerance and peaceful co-existence of peoples and religions.

In addition, Ethiopia has other UNESCO-registered heritages such as the Tiya stelae and the Konso landscapes, among others.

**Konso landscape** constitutes a spectacular example of a living cultural tradition stretching back 21 generations, more than 500 years, adapted to its dry hostile environment. The landscape demonstrates the shared values, social cohesion and engineering knowledge of its communities.

The site also features anthropomorphic wooden statues, grouped to represent respected members of their communities and particularly heroic events, which are an exceptional living testimony to funerary traditions of the Konso people.



In this regard, it is quite true that *Ethiopia is really a land of wonder and enchantment, a country with one of the richest histories on the continent, a land of contrasts and surprises and home to cultured and friendly people who are descended from some of the world's oldest civilizations.*

Ethiopia has nine heritages inscribed by UNESCO as world heritages, which would attract more visitors and contribute more to the growth in the number of tourists. Off course, favorable conditions have been created in infrastructure development, increasing number of flight destinations of the Ethiopian Airlines as well as the existing peace and stability coupled with the sound economic growth.

**FANOS Ethiopia Tours**

*Your get way to visit Ethiopia*

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